

# Letters Disclose How Hi School Graduates Fare in Armed Forces

## SERVICEMEN TELL FORMER TEACHER THEIR EXPERIENCES

From overseas, training camps, universities and aboard ships of the fleet come a steady stream of letters to Miss Irene Mills, high school instructor, in response to her efforts as an unofficial but highly effective "morale officer" to her former students now in the armed services. She has permitted The Herald to publish excerpts from those letters again—the first group were printed May 6.

In every one there is evidence that the serviceman knows what he's fighting for, that he deeply appreciates receiving copies of the Torrance high school paper, variously known as the "T.N.T." or "The Torch," that the writers possess a healthy good humor and that all of them are eager to finish the war job.

Read these letters—and you'll come to the realization that the minor inconveniences of civilian life should be taken in your stride if it brings those boys back home any sooner:

**ENSIGN BOB TOLSON** at Beville, Tex.: "I surely would like to have seen Bill Keefer while he was home. He must look nice with all his decorations—which reminds me: we've been trying for months to get the Navy to let us wear foreign duty ribbons here in Texas, but they can't see it our way. . . . The people here in Beville have

been most friendly to us. They introduce themselves on the street and, surprisingly enough, they remember us the next time they see us. . . . When President Roosevelt and Comacho were in Corpus Christi I got a good look at both of them. The President looked pretty tired but was smiling. Eleanor was also along as were many high-ranking military officials."

**HARRY G. RICHART**, seaman 1/c: "Since I last wrote you I have received two school papers. I thank you again for sending them and would appreciate your thanking anyone connected with this mail service. They are doing me a big favor. Since I left home 13 months ago. . . . I gather that Torrance is well drained of its young fellows. It is too bad that they have to take so many of the school. It will be a big job for someone to get them back in school so they can finish their education. Really, though, I don't suppose anyone of us would get to use our education if Tojo was running things."

**LIEUT. HAROLD A. STEVENSON** in Naval Reserve at Pensacola, Fla.: "I am going on transport duty for Pan American Airways—that means flying to most any part of the world. There are four Naval aviators picked each month for this duty and I happen to be one of the lucky ones. So far I have averaged (and I am finished training) 96% per cent. This October will be my 13th year of flying and every day I like it even better than the day before."

**AVIATION CADET GEORGE W. POST** at James Millikin University, Decatur, Ill.: "Please tell any students you have that are thinking of becoming air cadets

to steer clear of Sheppard Field, Texas, if possible. That place is without doubt the worst Army camp in the U.S. As the Air Corps puts it: 'It's the only place on earth where you can stand hip deep in mud and have a sand blow in your face.' This place is heaven. It's a very old and small college, 600 students. Beautiful country and the town is very nice with just the right population—53,000. What people they are, too! Why, they would do anything for us cadets. . . . Nothing is stressed here more than physical fitness. . . . There are several rules we cadets must observe at all times. Some are: no spitting, swearing or talking to girls on the campus; cut square corners, proper uniform always and always wear garters."

**J. D. RADFORD** with a Fleet Air Base Unit in the South Pacific: "Guy Rowell was around here to read the last school paper with me. He is gone again now but I'll see him someday in the States I hope. . . . The thing I like here is the consistent weather—you can always count on the rain every day. . . . Our camp site was in the middle of the jungle and what a jungle—all trees, vines and unidentifiable plants. . . . There are full of noises after dark. Now we live in barracks and in a couple of months it will be just like home. Everything grows fast and big down here. The largest snake captured came out of here. I can't think of any good reason for wanting to catch one. If I ever catch one it will be because he cornered me and I had no choice. There are land crabs around as big as chickens. . . . They sound like a herd of horses when they get moving."

**MARTIN KALINA** with the Navy "somewhere overseas": "Just a line to thank you for your letters and school papers. I always turn to the page where the notes from all the boys in the service are first. Would you say 'hello' to all the gang in your next issue for me? Am now at (censored)."

**MRS. GLADYS WADDINGHAM** at Inglewood for her husband, a former faculty member: "I am sending you a dollar—50 cents is too hard to send—for a copy of 'Gone With the Wind.' Send one of them to Francis and use the other 50 cents to send one to anyone else whom you wish. He is in the hospital at present, had an operation May 13 but is getting along very well. . . . His long-delayed promotion finally came a few weeks ago so he is now a captain at Ford Ord."

**STAFF SERGEANT WILSON PAGE** in North Africa: "Took a trip up to the Roman ruins the other day and they were well worth seeing. Charley tracks made hundreds of years ago could be seen. There were numerous statues sculptured from marble. Two huge stone columns towered about 50 feet skyward. The baptistere displayed some magnificent mosaic work. . . . Failure of cooks to prepare lunch for us necessitated our digging up whatever we could find. Our dinner consisted of some large green onions pulled out of a nearby field plus some French bread for dessert. Personally, I believe that I prefer Spam. . . . The other night the fellows in our tent were voicing in no uncertain terms their opinion on the factory strikes back in the States. It doesn't seem right, especially in time of war, to carry on like they are. Certainly hope that they will get things straightened out before long. . . . To be able to enjoy the American standard of living again is something that we fellows are looking forward to with a great deal of anticipation."

**LIEUT. CARROLL JOE BENDER**, in England: "Just to let you know we are still thinking of you all back home even though we are quite busy here in England. Much is yet to be done to convince the boys on the other side that they are the losing team—which is certain if we don't relax. Have been to London and enjoyed the visit despite weather. A few hours of sightseeing and enjoying the hospitality of the big city. Greatest danger I've seen on the ground are the 'Piccadilly Commandos'—vicious women, these. Bike riding or walking are the only ways to get around. Gum and candy are scarce over here. Everything is rationed far more than you would believe. My boys and I have done exceptionally well in our work. Soon expect a few medals to place among our ribbons. . . . Torrance should be able to buy one heavy bomber or three medium bombers every six months in War Bonds. The English do it on far less."

**PRIVATE E. P. DUNLOP** in India: "I read each copy of the T.N.T. you send and especially appreciate news of Uncle Sam's

## Censor Adds Note to Revealing Letter from Southwest Pacific

It doesn't pay to take the "little men with all the gold"—meaning officers—literally when they say it "would be O.K. for us to tell our friends at home some of the places we have been."

That's what Miss Irene Mills, high school instructor, discovered when she received a badly mutilated letter from Wayne Atkin, formerly of 2116 Gramercy ave., now a gunner's mate "somewhere in the southwest Pacific." Clipped to the slashed letter was this brief note:

"Miss Mills: Your pupil talks too much! The censor." The prolific Atkin wrote as follows: "I wish I could tell you everything I've done since I've been out here but as you know that is impossible so I'll tell you what I can. We do all kinds of different work. They've used us for everything between CENSORED. The little men with all the gold decided that it would be O.K. for us to tell our friends at home some of the places we have been so here goes:

**Censor Clips Localities** "First, we put in at CENSORED. It was really a pretty island, green as everything. I had had a lot of fun there but we didn't stay very long. Next we went to CENSORED. It was a beautiful place but there wasn't anything to do there. We put into CENSORED. They had a swell little town here, but there was something in the wind so none of the crew got liberated."

"Then we went to CENSORED. It was just about the same as CENSORED only on a smaller scale. The place we are at now is just about the end of creation. All it is is a few little islands sitting in the middle of nowhere. There isn't anything here except a few natives, black as the ace of spades, who took their women to a different island when they saw CENSORED. "Boy, did they give us an initiation when we crossed the Equator. It was a lot worse than the Varsity initiation. They had one of our chiefs dressed up as Neptune, another as Davy Jones and our officer's cook was Neptune's son. CENSORED

nephews. Censorship regulations over here are rather strict and it isn't a good idea to write letters that contain news of what's going on around here. I recently completed a course in an Army technical school and in the near future expect to go out on a mission for an indefinite period. . . . Keep up your good work of informing the servicemen what is happening on the home front and we will do our best over here to end this war so that we may return home to our friends and loved ones. P. S. Don't grade this letter for grammar because I am afraid it wouldn't make a passing mark!"

**SERGEANT LESLIE C. FOSTER** at Fort Benning, Ga.: "I am in

now working with airborne glider infantry. I have a new rating now. . . . I'm working on the line now as a dope and fabric specialist."

**AIR CADET DAVID R. PIERSON** at Sheppard Field, Texas: "Thanks a lot for both your letters and the T.N.T.'s I've just finished a course in aeronautics at Lincoln, Neb., and did quite well in my studies. I had the highest grade average in my class but it's nothing to brag about because they are only five of us. I have just transferred from ground crew mechanic to aviation cadet. I had to give up a corporal's rating to do so but as long as I'll learn to fly it will be worth it. So far everything has been swell but sometimes I wish I were across doing some good over there instead of studying all the time."

**PRIVATE ROBERT A. ERNST** at Fort Benning, Ga.: "I have been in the service six months and love it. My basic training was at Camp Robinson in Arkansas. I have made my first stripe and am an assistant instructor on all the different guns at the school here. My job is to teach men who will some day be officers on the ways in which all the guns operate, how to clean them, take apart, put back together and when each should be used."

**EARL M. MORRISON** in Navy Medical department at Corona Navy hospital: "I have been in this service for about seven months and was transferred Jan. 29 from San Diego to Corona. I have been here for all the necessary overseas training and I like it fine. I am on night duty now. I haven't seen any active duty as yet but I hope to see it very soon. . . . War isn't a bed of roses by any means so it's up to you and I and all the people in the U.S. to pitch in and do just a little bit more so that some day we may all be together as in the days gone by."

**PRIVATE JOHNNY REYNOLDS** "somewhere overseas": "I have not seen a Torrance fellow since I left the States. The going is rough here but no sacrifice is too great for a country as great as ours. I would like to tell you where we are and what we are doing but that is impossible which is for our own safety—so, as I said before we will have tales to tell when we get home. Miss Mills, no reward is great enough for you and Torrance hi for the great service you are doing to keep the boys' spirits up."

**MRS. H. H. COIL**, of Gardena writes about her son, Vernon, who is an aerial gunner with the Army Air Force: "I guess he's been in the fight as he said in a letter that he could come home after 50 flights and he had 47 to go. He's in North Africa and says the climate is a great deal like California. Seemed disappointed because he hadn't seen any naked savages yet."

## WALLACE WOODS, with the Coast Guard at Buffalo, N. Y.: "I've been transferred from the West Coast back to the Great Lakes while our cutter is being repaired. We have been doing some ice-breaking near Canadian shores and rescuing buoys. The ice was 14 inches thick and it tore our bow up a little. The other Sunday I went over to Niagara Falls. That is sure one noisy place but it is pretty now when the ice is going over. Say, Miss Mills, there is a guy that should get The Torch and that's Billy Dean. He's about ready for action. He is a sergeant already in the Army Air Corps."

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